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tures on public health, including new construction, would rise from a total of £S 10.052 million budgeted for 1954 to an average of £S 12.358 million in the six-year period 1955-60. The expenditures envisaged for the entire period 1955-60 would be distributed as follows (in thousands of Syrian pounds):

	Total	Annual average
Anti-malarial campaign and dispensaries	3,100	517
Establishment of new hospitals and health units	8,350	1,392
Quarantine stations	300	50
Administration and operation of existing and new facilities including training of technical personnel	62,400	10,400
Total	74,150	12,358

III HOUSING

The postwar period has witnessed a considerable housing boom. In recent years construction has been on a scale double that of prewar years. The wartime backlog in housing, the increasing prosperity in the postwar period and the tendency toward a break-up of the larger family units have all contributed to this boom. Aside from a few houses built for civil servants, all of the construction has been private, and it has taken place without the help of a mortgage financing institution. In terms of value, probably over 80% of the new housing has been of the Western or European type, which is too costly for the vast majority of the people.

While the housing of the rural population and the lower classes in the cities is undoubtedly very bad, significant general improvement is likely to come about only as incomes and standards of living rise. It would be impractical for the government to direct substantial resources into housing for the masses which could not be supported by the present productivity of the economy. While the mission firmly believes that the state should take a greater interest in the improvement of housing, for the immediate future the government's role will have to be confined to (1) developing, through experimentation, methods of cheap and durable construction, (2) planning and assisting housing in new rural settlements, (3) constructing

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362 housing in urban centers which are growing rapidly owing to particular development projects, and (4) assisting in urban slum clearance.

To appraise the magnitude of the housing problem and provide a factual basis for a housing program, the mission suggests that a census of houses and buildings be carried out as soon as possible. Such a census could be conducted in cooperation with municipal authorities and would not entail much time or money.

One of the central problems is the enormous gap between the primitive mud and stone huts of the rural areas and the suburban slums on the one hand and the modern housing in the major cities on the other. Urban building codes modeled on Western European standards generally insist on building specifications which make housing much too expensive for the majority of the people. The result is that the poorer classes either are confined to the old quarters of the cities where housing is bad and overcrowded or have to move to the outskirts of the cities where building is unregulated. Rural slums without community services quickly develop and rent gouging and other forms of exploitation prevail. In the rural areas, too, there is an urgent need of developing improved houses which would not be excessively costly.

To meet this problem the mission recommends the establishment of an experimental building station near Damascus. The function of such a station would be to develop inexpensive but durable methods of construction for both rural and urban areas. It would use as a point of departure cheap local materials and traditional building techniques and seek to improve them in the light of modern technology and the experience gained in other countries. The type of housing erected by UNRWA in the refugee settlement at Ramadan, 40 kilometers northeast of Damascus, is indicative of the possibilities. These houses represent an interesting blend of traditional and modern materials used in accordance with modern techniques. While by no means a perfect solution they point the direction along which the experimental work we have in mind should proceed.

Elsewhere the mission has outlined the assistance which the government might provide for the erection of housing in the new rural settlements which would be undertaken. We have suggested, in addition, that the Agricultural Bank make loans for farm houses; and the measures proposed to enhance the security of tenure and independence of tenants should also help to improve rural housing indirectly.

Here we propose to deal only with the government's role in urban

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housing. We urge that the government should in the first instance finance the construction of housing in cities which are undergoing rapid development and are experiencing or will shortly experience great overcrowding. A case in point is Latakia. The development program for the port makes no provision at present for the accommodation of the rapidly growing population, so that slum conditions are steadily aggravating. The mission accordingly recommends that the government earmark £S 3 million to finance housing in this city. A similar sum should be set aside for housing in other rapidly developing urban centers such as Jisr ech Choghour at the northern end of the Ghab and the cities in the provinces of Jezireh and Euphrates.

No attempt has yet been made to deal with the problem of slums in such major cities as Damascus and Aleppo. These two cities and Latakia have been working out some sort of housing plans involving the expropriation of land, the construction of houses and their subsequent sale. Damascus has made the greatest progress with its program and has reached the stage of letting contracts. In all these cases, however, the housing to be constructed will cost from £S 8,000 to £S 12,000 per unit, a price which obviously only the more well-to-do can afford. It seems unwise to devote the limited resources available to such a purpose. We would suggest that these programs in the future be re-oriented as far as possible in the direction of resettling people now crowded together in the old slums of the cities. The program could take the form of making land available on reasonable terms and permitting people to build their own houses in accordance with approved specifications. Assistance could be given in the form of building materials and certain elements of the construction, with the people contributing most of the labor themselves. The types of houses to be built could be developed in the building research station we have proposed. To carry out such a program the municipalities might set aside £S 5 million over the next six years for buying land, and another £S 3.5 million for assistance in building. Additional legislation which would enable municipalities to acquire land for this purpose at reasonable prices may well be necessary, particularly since experience has demonstrated, as in Aleppo, that the price of land may triple or quadruple in price in anticipation of its expropriation.

To carry out the proposed functions relating to housing, the government will require expert assistance. Syria has enough engineers, labor and contractors, but housing experts are lacking. We suggest therefore that a

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362 small mission of foreign experts be recruited to set up the building research station and advise the government on carrying out the housing program.

The total cost of the program we have recommended for the years 1955-60 would amount to approximately £S 7.5 million, apart from the municipal effort and the cost of housing in the new rural settlements for which provision has been made elsewhere in this report.[25] This sum would be distributed as follows (in thousands of Syrian pounds):

	Total	Average annual
Housing census	240	40
Building research station, including administration	1,010	168
Housing construction	6,000	1,000
Technical assistance	250	42
Total	7,500	1,250

[25] See Annex I, p. 469.

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ANNEX I
NOTES ON SETTLEMENTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

1 INTRODUCTION

Syria's 3.65 million people dwell in an estimated 8,265 settlements, of which about 61% are towns and villages and the rest farms. Only Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Deir ez Zor and Latakia can be said to be preponderantly urban; the remaining communities have fairly evenly balanced urban and rural characteristics or else are clearly agricultural. About 23% of Syria's population lives in Damascus and Aleppo, 17% in 21 other cities of more than 10,000 inhabitants, 6% in 31 mixed settlements and over 50% in agricultural settlements. A little less than 3% is nomadic.

But the character of Syria's settlements is changing and the picture presented above will probably not be accurate for long. People of the mountain regions are slowly moving down to the plains. Both urban and rural settlements are being established in areas newly opened to cultivation, such as the Jezireh, the Ghab and the Roudj. The achievement of political independence started a trend toward urbanization, stimulated by construction of new roads and development of motorized transport.

Despite a considerable postwar building boom, there are probably fewer buildings in relation to the population in Syria than in most other countries. Although the exact number of dwelling units is not known, it probably does not exceed 350,000 or approximately one for every 10 inhabitants. In recent years new construction has been at a high rate. In 1953, for example, the number of housing units probably increased by about 5.15%. While this is substantially in excess of the normal increase in the population, account should be taken of the fact that the newer dwelling units probably do not house on the average more than six people. On this basis, only about 8% of the new construction, or some 1,460 units, were available for replacement of existing housing. In the postwar period the demand for housing has been stimulated by the rise in population, the wartime building lag, the growth of the foreign community, the return of expatriate Syrians, changes in the geographical distribution of population and the tendency of patriarchal families to break up into simple

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362 families requiring one dwelling each. While the need for a high and even higher rate of construction in the future is undeniable, it is doubtful that the factors which have operated to create an effective demand for housing will altogether be as effective in the future. Some decline in building over the coming years may well take place.

365 361 Community services have not kept pace with construction. Damascus and Aleppo have been most nearly provided with the essential streets, water supply and sewerage facilities, but the medium-sized and the small communities are very badly serviced. Except for water supply, this is not yet a problem for the small settlements, but it is serious for the medium-sized centers with their motorized transport and denser populations. The social services—education, public health, social welfare and community development—are likewise not yet adequately developed in Syria, but the country is commendably aware of the need and in the field of education, at least, has increased its expenditures impressively in the last few years. A few of the larger municipalities take care of their community services and have undertaken town-planning, but the central government, through the Ministry of Public Works, merely serves as technical advisor to the municipalities. There is no central government department with responsibility for housing. And while there are ministries for education and public health, no government department is responsible for social welfare or community development programs and no such programs exist. The administrative organizations in these fields clearly need strengthening.

Investment in Settlements

457 361 Over 60% of Syria's total annual investment is estimated to go into settlements, for housing, community and social services, and other purposes. During 1949-53 this type of investment averaged £S 138 million annually, of which £S 15 million (almost 11%) was from public funds and £S 123 million (89%) was private investment. On the basis of a 3.65 million population the annual investment in this sector was £S 39.4 per capita, of which £S 35.1 represents private funds.

[362] Perhaps as much as 80% of the private investment and about 72% of the total investment in settlements goes into housing; the balance is divided between industrial and commercial buildings, in that order. Private building activity reached an all-time high in 1953.

Of public investment in settlements, 80% is municipal and only 20%

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IV HOUSING

361 The housing program for the next few years should have three main objectives. First, the number of houses should be considerably increased. This can be accomplished most effectively, particularly in the rural areas, by making it easier for people to become landowners and thus providing them with an incentive to build and maintain their houses. Secondly, construction techniques must be improved and self-help must be encouraged, so that better housing can be achieved without expending much more on it than is spent today. In this connection, government advice and assistance in developing types of durable but cheap housing and in land purchases, distribution of materials and encouragement of community efforts is important. Also, through legislation or otherwise, provision must be made for the acquisition of land at non-speculative prices by the low-income groups; this is particularly important in urban areas. The third objective must be timely government planning, and to some extent even financing, of housing in areas which are developing rapidly and becoming more densely populated.

Although in the future the municipal and local authorities should assume a leading role in housing development, at the beginning the government will have to take the initiative. The mission proposes a six-year housing program costing about £S 28 million, including housing in the new rural settlements discussed elsewhere in this report. Of this the municipal contribution, for purchase of land and for slum clearance, would be only £S 8.5 million. The proposed expenditure is shown in Table 4.

The recommended census of houses and buildings should not be postponed until the next population census, but should be organized during 1955 and taken in 1956. The proposed experimental building station should be located where the characteristics of both a desert and an irrigated area can be found, perhaps in the eastern fringe of the irrigated zone of Homs. Its principal task should be to experiment with different types of materials and to develop for different localities dwellings which would be durable and cheap. Building codes should then be modified to permit the erection of such houses within city limits.

The urban housing program we have outlined in the Main Report envisages government financial assistance for municipalities (1) to meet urgent housing requirements stemming from a rapid growth in their

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TABLE 4 Proposed Six-Year Housing Program

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	(Thousand £S) Total
General proposals	
Census*	240
Experimentation	760
Technical assistance	250
Administration	250
Total	1,500
Development projects	
Roudj	1,920
Dry farming communities	1,056
Ghab	600
Urban centers	3,000
Latakia	3,000
Total	9,576
Socio-economic program*	
Buying land	10,000
Slum clearance	7,000
Total	17,000
Total program	28,076
Of which:	
Capital expenditures	13,836
Recurrent expenditures	5,740

* Figures for land purchase and slum clearance include 50% municipal contributions.

population, and (2) to start slum clearance projects for the most congested areas. With respect to the first we suggest that the municipalities concentrate on housing between a range of £S 1,000 to £S 4,000 per unit. The type of house built by the municipality should be only a nucleus which can be expanded by the owner himself. The nucleus dwelling and the lot should be sold to the occupier on easy terms. In slum clearance projects the primary aim of the municipality should be to provide building areas and utilities at reasonable cost. In addition, certain key building components such as windows, doors and roofing materials should be provided to those willing to construct houses with their own labor, and expert building advice should be furnished. It is, above all, important that building lots be reasonable in price and convenient to places of work. In Latakia, for example, it was found that, after land was expropriated and applications

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362 invited for building lots, only one-fourth of the land was taken up because it was too expensive and too inaccessible.

We have given some attention to the possibility of establishing a mortgage bank to assist in financing private building in the cities. We believe that such an institution will ultimately be desirable and necessary, but, owing to limitations of funds, we have not recommended that one be established before 1961. Meanwhile, the project might well be studied. Any mortgage bank that might ultimately be created should be designed primarily to help finance low-cost housing, particularly since the construction of housing for the more well-to-do elements in the population has apparently not been significantly hampered by lack of funds.

The possibility of gradually abandoning existing rent controls should also be studied. The elimination of rent control on new building might be a suitable first step and might have the incidental advantage of discouraging the continuous influx of new people into the urban areas.

361 v COMMUNITY SERVICES

The mission's provision of an average annual investment of £S 14.3 million for community services must be regarded as extremely tentative. In the last analysis, no final program can be recommended until a thorough analysis of municipal finances is completed. At present, comprehensive data on municipal expenditures and anticipated financial resources are lacking. We suggest that a study of this subject be undertaken promptly, so that the magnitude of a program of municipal services can be determined in the light of the municipalities' own resources and the contribution which the central government can make to them either by loans or by grants.

Roads and Streets

363 The construction of roads and streets has been second in importance among municipal programs. Except in the large cities, paving is generally limited to a few central streets because of its cost.

Hereafter the construction and maintenance of all types of roads connecting settlements, including the portions passing through the settlements, should be the financial responsibility of the central government. Municipalities, freed of this burden on their budgets, should take care to spend

63:Simmons et al G-S (1941-1951) 1964
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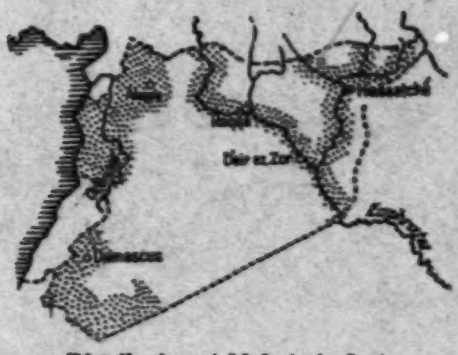

Distribution of Malaria in Syria

sive work has been carried on, in co-operation with the Near East Foundation, in the agricultural districts around Damascus where 224 villages with over 180,000 inhabitants were protected in 1949-50. A marked reduction in the number of cases has been noted in all the areas treated. Successive examinations of over 500 children in 16 treated villages near Damascus revealed a decrease in spleen rates of from 78 per cent in 1950 to 20 per cent in 1951.[8] A malaria control program was inaugurated in the Homs district in 1952, under the auspices of the World Health Organization. *Anopheles sacharovi* and *A. claviger* are the principal vectors in the Damascus region; *A. sacharovi* and *A. superpictus*, in the river valleys in the northeast.

Rickettsial Infections. Localized outbreaks of louse-borne typhus are recurrent during the winter and the spring months, particularly in the congested quarters of the towns and the cities and among the nomadic tribes. Over 1,900 cases were reported in 1942, when the acute shortages associated with the war created conditions conducive to the spread of the infection. Since that date no more than 30 to 95 sporadic cases have been recorded in any one year. Control measures, including deverminization procedures and the immunization of the exposed populations, are enforced by the health authorities in affected areas.

No differentiation is made in the official

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